

I have been able to do this apparently with some success in the case of certain organisations and Institutions, and I have not met with resentment or criticism. This is because the rationale is socially acceptable since what this system succeeds in assessing is the relative standing of an individual scientist in his field of work. As I have said, although it will be a mistake to judge all people occupying scientific positions on the basis of their published material, it must be realised that a similar mistake can be made if the "other criteria" used for making relative evaluation of scientists are not based on sound principles and there should be little room for the operation of the "old boy network". What is regarded as just by a Committee, must be socially acceptable by both the paymasters as well as the employed scientists. Such approaches ensure that certain people who have devoted a large part of their time to the development and housekeeping aspects of scientific institutions (and ensured that reports are properly written and the interests of their institutions are well protected) are not left out in the assessment process. I am mentioning this because recently we realised that we had been making a mistake by using the same yardstick (published material *etc.*) for all the scientists. This had adversely affected certain individuals who worked very hard and with devotion and thereby ensured the progress of other scientists and institutions without themselves having the opportunities to carry out research and publish papers.

Because publications have been playing a pivotal role in the careers of scientists, publication of papers and patents has become a major activity of scientists all over the world. Priorities both in the matter relating to patents and the announcement of new data have become important. In fact, in the West, in certain areas of research the situation has acquired neurotic qualities. New findings are keyed in by scientists into an international database network and the data and time entered by the scientists. No doubt, such an unrefereed process provides some satisfaction to individual scientists but I fear this will add to a lot of confusion. No doubt the most powerful will win in the process,

and industry will benefit enormously. Thus the most industrialised and most technologically developed will benefit most. How will the scientists of the Third World countries fare in this game? In my view, their plight will be even worse than it is now. And if we don't meet the challenge of modern communication systems, it will soon become apparent to young scientists that the only safe place to do science is in Western countries. Already many Indians feel that way. Getting things done is an uphill task in India even in the best institutions. If any one wants recognition for his work he has to aim at international recognition. That means publication in foreign journals of repute and here the young scientists meet with prejudice. How has this come about? In 'the old days', good young scientists went abroad as soon as possible in order to work with famous scientists whose work they had read and whom they held in awe. There, they did work and communicated their papers to the scientific society on their subject. If their work was good and specially if it presented exciting findings they received applause, they made many friends, greatly enlarged their circle of acquaintances which then enlarged further when their papers appeared in the main journals of their subject. When they returned to India they continued to work in the same field (it is not easy to excel in another field) and endeavoured to publish in the same journals which was facilitated for a while by the large circle of acquaintances they had acquired while abroad. They realised it was pointless publishing in the few Indian journals (if indeed they existed in their field), because their papers would not be read by this large circle of acquaintances for whose appreciation this entire research was being done, in the first place. Discovering something is enjoyable but the main pleasure of the discovery lies in the appreciation (and envy) by others—especially those whom you admire and respect. (I think you will appreciate the discouragement that would have been felt by an Indian scientist who made an important discovery, published it in an Indian journal and finally ended up with no one taking any notice of it, especially his large foreign acquaintance who would dismiss his discovery as being not authentic or even as wrong.) Imagine his further disappoint-

Is Dr Paul's
own thing?